

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-06  
AID-05 NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01  
L-03 H-01 PA-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03  
INR-07 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 PC-01  
/110 W

-----027292 131749Z /53

R 121551Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BANJUL

AMEMBASSY BISSAU

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, EFIN

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH ECOWAS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

OUATTARA

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1. EMBASSY INTERVIEW OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OUATTARA ON  
AUGUST 9 FOUND HIM IN OPTIMISTIC MOOD FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL  
CONCLUSION OF RECENT LAGOS AND LOME ECOWAS MEETINGS. OUATTARA  
BEGAN BY COMMENTING ON HIS VISION OF ECOWAS AND ITS MEMBER  
STATES SAYING THAT THERE WAS QUOTE TOTAL COMMITMENT UNQUOTE TO  
THE ECOWAS IDEA AMONG MEMBERS DESPITE THEIR OBVIOUS DIVERSITY.  
CONFRONTED WITH MEMBER DIFFERENCES, QUOTE IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT

TO DO SOMETHING GENERAL BUT SYMBOLICALLY IMPORTANT THAN TO DWELL ON SPECIFICS UNQUOTE. OUATTARA THEN POINTED TO THE ECOWAS TREATY ITSELF AND CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER VOTING AS EXAMPLES.

2. ACCORDING TO OUATTARA ECOWAS HEADS OF STATE, AS A WHOLE, REMAIN UNCONVINCED OF THE COMMUNITY'S VIABILITY DESPITE THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE ECOWAS PRINCIPLE. OUATTARA PLANS A PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN BASED ON A SERIES OF WELL-PUBLICIZED TRIPS AND MEETINGS TO HELP GIVE FURTHER CREDIBILITY TO THE ORGANIZATION.

3. WHEN ASKED HOW HE PLANNED TO INITIATE SPECIFIC INITIATIVES OUATTARA REPLIED THAT HE WAS IN QUOTE NO HURRY UNQUOTE AND THAT QUOTE MY STRATEGY IS TO SELECT AREAS OF LEAST RESISTANCE UNQUOTE. OUATTARA'S FIRST EFFORT UTILIZING THIS STRATEGY WILL BE THE QUOTE FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLES UNQUOTE WITH THE SECRETARIAT SOON BEGINNING WORK ON A STANDARD BILATERAL AGREEMENT. HE EXPECTS MOST MEMBER STATES WILL READILY SIGN SUCH AN AGREEMENT AND THAT PEER PRESSURE AMONG MEMBERS WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO SECURE THE AGREEMENT OF POTENTIAL PROBLEM BILATERALS, E.G., TOGO-BENIN. OUATTARA STATED THAT THIS MEANT A SECTOR BY SECTOR RATHER THAN A BROAD FRONT APPROACH TO ECOWAS DEVELOPMENT.

3. DURING DISCUSSION OF FOLLOWING SPECIFIC SUBJECTS OUATTARA LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTINUALLY STRESSED ECOWAS NEED TO REMAIN FLEXIBLE AND REFRAIN FROM RIGID TIMETABLES.

(A) ROLE OF NON-MEMBER STATES - OUATTARA SAID THAT THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF ECOWAS IS ECONOMIC SELF RELIANCE WHICH HE DEFINED NOT AS REGIONAL AUTARKY BUT QUOTE A STATE OF NON-DEPENDENCE ON ANY ONE TRADING PARTNER UNQUOTE GIVING THE COMMUNITY QUOTE LATITUDE IN EXTERNAL TRADE RELATIONS UNQUOTE. ALSO ALTHOUGH HE HAS STUDIED SEVERAL EXISTING AND DEFUNCT ATTEMPTS TO FORM ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES, NONE WILL BECOME THE SOLE MODEL FOR ECOWAS. STILL IN A TACIT ADMISSION OF THE REGION'S NEED FOR OUTSIDE MANAGERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES, OUATTARA STATED THAT HE HOPES TO TALK TO EEC OFFICIALS IN EUROPE AND STATE/AID AND IMF/IBRD OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON IN NEXT TWO WEEKS TO EXPLORE COOPERATIVE ASSISTANCE FOR PROJECTS STEMMING FROM THE SERIES OF ECONOMIC STUDIES BEING MADE BY SECRETARIAT. FYI: OUATTARA PROMISED TO PROVIDE TRIP SCHEDULE ASAP. EMBASSY WILL FORWARD. END FYI.

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AID-05 NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01  
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/110 W

-----021501 131748Z /53

R 121551Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2915

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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(B) AN ECONOMIC NEGOTIATING BLOC - AS A COROLLARY TO THE  
SELF RELIANCE PRINCIPLE, OUATTARA HOPES TO SEE ECOWAS EVOLVE  
TO A SINGLE NEGOTIATING ENTITY IN GATT, AND IN OTHER MULTI-  
LATERAL AND NOW BILATERAL ECONOMIC FORA. HE ALSO PERSONALLY  
BELIEVES IT WOULD EVENTUALLY ACT AS A BLOC IN INTERNATIONAL  
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POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS E.G., UN AND OAU.

(C) PROTOCOLS - OUATTARA ADMITTED THAT THE PROTOCOLS HAVE  
BEEN RATIFIED BY ONLY 8 MEMBER STATES, BUT INSISTED THAT PROBLEM  
WAS NOT SERIOUS. SINCE ALL STATES HAVE SIGNED THE PROTOCOLS,

SECRETARIAT CAN ENACT THEM PROVISIONALLY. RATIFICATION WAS MERE FORMALITY. NON-RATIFICATION WAS CAUSED BY QUOTE FORGETFULNESS UNQUOTE OF SOME MEMBERS. SECRETARIAT WAS TAKING STEPS TO REMIND THEM.

(D) CONFLICTING DEVELOPMENTAL/POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES - OUATTARA READILY AGREED THAT THIS WAS A POTENTIAL PITFALL BUT THOUGHT THAT HIS STRATEGY OF FLEXIBILITY AND CAUTION WOULD EVENTUALLY IRON OUT MAJOR PROBLEMS. AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT HE STATED THAT ECOWAS SHOULD SET ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDELINES BUT LEAVE IMPLEMENTATION TO THE MEMBER STATES. THUS QUOTE STATE-RUN AND FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS COULD EXIST SIDE BY SIDE WITHIN ECOWAS UNQUOTE.

(E) MEMBER DEFECTIONS - NOT SURPRISINGLY, OUATTARA CONSIDERED DEFECTIONS UNLIKELY. HE SAID THAT THE COMMUNITY'S LARGE MEMBERSHIP AND DIVERSITY WERE ITS GREATEST ASSETS (QUOTE YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND AT LEAST TWO STATES TO AGREE ON SOMETHING UNQUOTE). HE CONSIDERED THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY'S RELATIVE HOMOGENEITY AND COMPACTNESS AS ITS FATAL FLAW ONCE DIFFERENCES AROSE AMONG THE MEMBER STATES. HE STILL SAID, HOWEVER, THAT ANY ECOWAS STATE WAS FREE TO DO AS IT WISHED ALTHOUGH A NON-ECOWAS STATE IN AN ECOWAS DOMINATED WEST AFRICA WOULD BE SUCH AN ANOMALY THAT EVEN DISGRUNTLED MEMBERS WOULD TEND TO REMAIN IN THE COMMUNITY. IN ANY CASE, IF ONE OR SEVERAL MEMBERS INCLUDING THE LARGE CONTRIBUTORS LEFT THE COMMUNITY OUATTARA BELIEVES THAT THE OTHERS WOULD CARRY ON.

(F) ROLE OF SPECIALIZED WEST AFRICAN GROUPINGS - OUATTARA SAID THAT HE WAS STUDYING WAYS FOR ECOWAS TO USE THE MORE SPECIALIZED WEST AFRICAN ORGANIZATIONS, E.G., OMVS. AS FOR THE LONG TERM, QUOTE WHO KNOWS? UNQUOTE.  
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(G) COMPENSATION FUND - MEMBER STATES ARE BEING ASSESSED A TOTAL OF DOLLARS 50 MILLION PAID-IN CAPITAL AND DOLLARS 75 MILLION TO FINANCE FUND'S FIRST YEAR'S OPERATIONS. THE FUND'S ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET THIS YEAR IS DOLLARS 800,000. ALL LEVIED CONTRIBUTIONS MUST BE MADE IN A QUOTE CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY UNQUOTE. OUATTARA AVOIDED THE QUESTION OF THE FUND'S ABILITY TO COMPENSATE FULLY ALL FUTURE CLAIMS BY SAYING THAT LARGE SCALE DRAW DOWNS WERE NOT EXPECTED FOR MANY YEARS.  
WYMAN

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## Message Attributes

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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009